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Proceedings

at the

Unveiling of the Portrait of

General Emerson H. Liscum

In the State House at Montpelier, Vermont

October 23, 1902



GENERAL EMERSON H. LISCUM.

Vermont General Emerson H. Liscum 1902

HONORS TO A HERO.

PROCEEDINGS

Attending the Unveiling and Presentation
of a Portrait of

GENERAL EMERSON H. LISCUM,

Colonel of the Ninth Infantry, U. S. A. and Brigadier
General of Volunteers,

In the Hall of the Vermont House of Representatives,

OCTOBER 23, 1902.

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PROCEEDINGS IN JOINT ASSEMBLY.

OCTOBER 23, 1902. 2.30 P. M.

The Senate and House of Representatives met in the Hall of the House of Representatives, in pursuance of a joint resolution, which was read by the Clerk and is as follows :

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two houses meet in joint assembly on Thursday, October 23rd, instant, at two o'clock and thirty minutes for the purpose of receiving and unveiling the portrait of the late Brigadier General Emerson H. Liscum and listening to an address on his life and military service by Honorable G. G. Benedict.

HIS HONOR ZED S. STANTON,

President of the Senate, in the Chair.

FREDERICK G. FLEETWOOD,

Secretary of State, Clerk.

The Joint Assembly dissolved.

FREDERICK G. FLEETWOOD,

Secretary of State.

JOINT RESOLUTION.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the Clerk of the House of Representatives is hereby directed to procure the printing of one thousand copies of the report of the proceedings attending the unveiling and presentation of the portrait of General E. H. Liscum on October 23d, 1902, for the use of the General Assembly.

JOHN H. MERRIFIELD,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

ZED S. STANTON,

President of the Senate.

Approved November 11, 1902.

JOHN G. McCULLOUGH,

Governor.

STATE OF VERMONT,

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the original resolution approved November 11, 1902.

FREDERICK G. FLEETWOOD,

Secretary of State.

December 2, 1902.

PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS.

The Legislature of Vermont, at its session following the receipt of intelligence of the death of Brigadier General Emerson H. Liscum, who fell in battle in front of the City of Tien Tsin, China, in July, 1900, authorized the Governor to procure a life-size portrait of Gen. Liscum, to be placed in the State House. This duty was performed; the portrait was painted, and on the 23d of October, 1902, during the legislative session, was unveiled and presented to the State, with impressive public exercises.

THE PUBLIC EXERCISES.

The Hall of the House of Representatives, in which the presentation took place, was filled with a large and distinguished audience, comprising the Governor and his Staff, the members of the Senate and House of Representatives, present in Joint Assembly, and many prominent citizens. The portrait rested upon an easel in front of the Speaker's desk, and was covered with the national colors. Mrs. Liscum, her sister, Miss Diven, and friends, had seats near the portrait.

The Assembly was called to order by the President of the Senate, and the portrait was unveiled by General Theodore S. Peck, and Col. G. G. Benedict, representing the Vermont Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, of which General Liscum was a member; and was presented by Ex-Governor William W. Stickney in the following words :

EX-GOVERNOR STICKNEY'S PRESENTATION.

Mr. President:

Vermont has a splendid history, which is the pride and inspiration of all her people. It is everywhere recognized that her pre-eminence both in peace and in war is altogether in excess of her circumscribed boundaries and her mountainous territory. The welfare of the State requires that we should never forget the true source of her greatness. For in all the days of the years of her statehood, distinction has been achieved solely by the character and conduct of her men, who knew their duty and had the courage to do it.

In providing memorials for such sons, whose praise grows not old, the State honors herself and at the same time teaches a needed lesson to each succeeding generation. Therefore in and about this capitol stand trophies and statues, and pendant on its walls are tablets and portraits which "recall the records of imperishable deeds" and perpetuate names that deserve to be remembered. And as the years go by Vermont continues to add lustre to her roll of honor and to grow in the wealth of patriotism.

Touched in heart by the devotion to duty of one of her sons the Legislature at its last session adopted a joint resolution which reads as follows :

In consideration of the distinguished valor of Brigadier-General Emerson H. Liscum, commanding the Ninth U. S. Infantry, who gave his life for the flag in the assault at the siege of Tien Tsin, China, July 13, 1900, be it

Resolved by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

That the Governor be, and is hereby authorized in behalf of the people of the State to contract with a painter of competent ability and experience for the painting of a portrait of General Liscum, to be suitably inscribed and placed in the State Capitol in commemoration of his distinguished service to his country, and as a token of affection and admiration of the people of his native State.

In obedience to the duty imposed by this act, Mr. Walter Gilman Page of Boston, an artist of good repute, was given the commission. He has faithfully performed his work and produced a portrait which is a good likeness and most satisfactory to General Liscum's family and friends.

And now I have the honor to report that this completes the duty assigned to me, and here in the presence of His Excellency the Governor, and the General Assembly of Vermont, I deliver the portrait and accompanying tablet to the State. May they be placed near the old

battle flags of the War of the Great Rebellion, which are
and I trust ever will be,

“Telling of men, that in battle array
Ready in heart and ready in hand
March with banner, and bugle, and fife,
To the death, for their native land.”

The portrait was accepted by Governor John G. McCullough, as follows :

GOVERNOR McCULLOUGH'S ACCEPTANCE.

*Mr. President, Governor Stickney, and Gentlemen of the
Joint Assembly:*

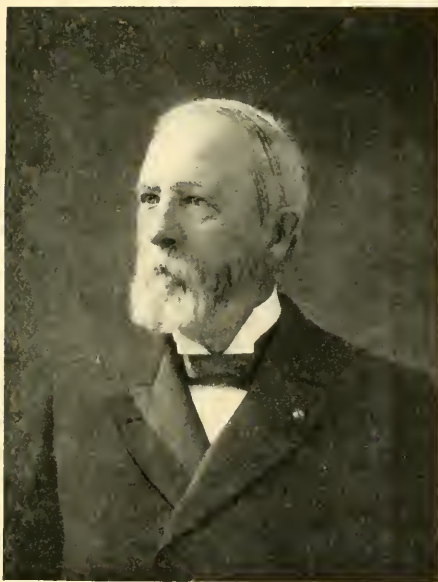
It is my pleasant duty to accept, in the name and on behalf of the State, this portrait of General Liscum. That it is a true and faithful likeness is attested by her who knows better than any other, and who graces by her sympathetic presence this occasion, and by his many friends. Let this canvas, the token of the admiration and affection of the people of his native State,—as the resolution of the General Assembly of two years ago expresses it,—continue for the unborn generations of the future to look down upon, and inspire the observing youth of Vermont with the same feeling of loyalty, the same fidelity to duty, the same ardent patriotism, the same love of country and of the flag, as during his whole life actuated and influenced the noble, brave and heroic original.

But it is not my privilege to deliver a memorial address. The faithful portraiture of General Liscum's life work is reserved for Colonel Benedict. It rests with me only to say in a word, that General Liscum was the same great soldier, whether risking his life or

spilling his blood at Big Bethel, or Cedar Mountain, or Gettysburg in the War for Liberty and Union;—or risking his life and spilling his blood at San Juan Hill in the War for Humanity;—or falling at last like a Soldier of the Cross on the other side of the globe beneath the walls of Tien Tsin, in the War for Civilization and Christianity.

Let this portrait then fittingly and forever perpetuate the memory of a life dedicated in one war to Liberty, in another to Humanity, and in a third to Christianity.

The Memorial Address of the occasion was then delivered by Colonel George Grenville Benedict, as follows :



GEORGE GRENVILLE BENEDICT.

COL. BENEDICT'S ADDRESS.

Mr. President, Governor McCullough, and Ladies and Gentlemen:

The career of Gen. Emerson H. Liscum was that of a model soldier. He was born July 16, 1841, in Huntington, Chittenden county, removing thence to Burlington in his childhood with the family of his father, Mr. John Liscum, who was for many years a respected citizen of that city. He is remembered in Burlington as a bright and manly boy. His taste for military life was early developed. He had hardly got his growth before he became a member of the "Howard Guard" of Burlington, one of the few companies of uniformed militia which were keeping up some semblance of military organization in Vermont before the outbreak of the Civil War. The dawn of early manhood was on his cheek when the echoes of the guns that opened on Fort Sumter, woke the soundest sleepers in the North from their dreams of peace, and he was but nineteen, when, in April, 1861, he enlisted as a Union volunteer. He went to the front a few days later as a corporal in Co. H, of the First Regiment of Vermont Volunteers. He was with the regiment when, under Gen.

John W. Phelps, it made, at Newport News, the first military occupancy of the hostile portion of the soil of Virginia that was made by the Union troops, and he took part on the 10th of June, at Big Bethel, Virginia, in the first engagement of the war, dignified by the title of a battle; the first assault by Union infantry upon confederate entrenchments; and the first experience of Vermont troops under fire, in the great war for the Union.

A few months after the expiration of the brief term of service of the First Vermont, young Liscum, on the 1st of February, 1862, enlisted in the Twelfth U. S. Infantry, and was soon again at the front. The 12th infantry was a part of Prince's brigade of Augur's division of Gen. Banks's corps, of the Army of Virginia, which in midsummer of that year was confronting the enemy between the Rappahannock and Rapidan rivers, while McClellan was threatening Richmond. Liscum's bright and cool courage soon attracted notice, and he was promoted through the non-commissioned grades of corporal and sergeant to be first sergeant of the A company in the second battalion of the Twelfth. In the bloody battle of August 9, 1862, at Cedar Mountain, fought by Banks and Stonewall Jackson with a loss of 3,000 men in killed and wounded on the two sides, Liscum was wounded in the left elbow. He is mentioned by name in

the report of the battalion commander as having rendered gallant service in that battle, and is also mentioned by name in the report of Gen. Augur, commanding the division. He was back in the ranks as soon as the wound healed and shared the fortunes of the army under Generals Pope, McClellan and Burnside during the remainder of the year 1862—a year marked by many battles including those of the Second Bull Run, Antietam, and Fredericksburgh. At the close of the year the 12th infantry was a part of Sykes's division of the Fifth Army Corps, composed almost wholly of regulars.

In February, 1863, he received his first commission—a promotion from the ranks to a second lieutenancy in the Twelfth Infantry—followed three months later by a promotion to be first lieutenant. He commanded his company in the battle of Chancellorsville, May 1 and 2, 1863, and on the second day at Gettysburg, in the portion of that field where the Fifth corps replaced the broken lines of Sickles's Third corps, and with terrible loss held the position in front of Little Round Top. The Twelfth Infantry suffered severely at the foot of that hill, and Liscum fell there with a bullet wound in the right thigh.

In the Wilderness campaign, the following May, Liscum was detailed as ambulance officer for his division of the Fifth corps—an office charged with responsible

duties in battle, often involving serious risk, as shown by the lists of killed and wounded. The chief ambulance officer of the corps, in his report, commends Lieut. Liscum for his coolness in danger and faithful performance of duty in that bloody campaign. In the Cold Harbor campaign, he especially distinguished himself in the battle of Bethesda Church, June 2, 1864, and was brevetted captain for gallant service in that battle, and in the final campaign before Richmond.

In July, 1866, he was appointed a captain in the 24th U. S. Infantry, composed of colored troops. In July, 1870, he was transferred to the 19th U. S. Infantry. In May, '92, he was promoted to be major of the 22d Infantry, and in May, '96, he became lieutenant-colonel of the 24th Infantry. His service for the thirty years following the close of the Civil War was much of it on the Western frontier, and in the campaigns against the Ute and other war-like Indian tribes on the plains. The details of this service have not been at my command; but I know that it was faithful and efficient service.

In the war with Spain, in Cuba, Col. Liscum commanded the 24th Infantry, which was part of the third brigade of Kent's division of the Fifth Army Corps. The brigade had a prominent part, July 1, 1898, in the storming of San Juan Hill, the capture of which sealed the fate of

Santiago. As the brigade moved out into open ground in front of the Spanish intrenchments, it came under a heavy fire, by which Col. Wikoff, commanding the brigade, was killed, and fifteen minutes later Lieut.-Col. Worth, 13th Infantry, who succeeded to the command, was severely wounded. The command of the brigade then devolved upon Liscum, but had not been exercised by him many minutes when he fell, struck in the breast by a Mauser bullet which passed through the right side of his body and out through the shoulder blade, carrying with it fragments of the bone. He was borne back to a hollow through which ran the San Juan creek, whose banks were covered with wounded men. To the surgeons who came to him, he said: "Help those men first, they need it more than I do," and lifting himself upon his unshattered shoulder, he ordered back to the charging line such of the men near him as were fit for duty. Nine months of sick leave and a slow recovery (due in large part to the nursing of his devoted wife), followed, though it never became complete. He was promoted to be a brigadier-general of volunteers for gallant service in Cuba; was assigned to the command of a brigade in the Eighth corps; and as soon as he reported for duty was ordered to the Philippines. There he was assigned to the command of a brigade and of the important province of Tar-

lac, in Luzon. He dispersed the insurgent forces in the province, and the first organized surrender of a considerable armed body of insurgents was made to him. He brushed the insurgents from the line of railway; captured hundreds of rifles, and by his wise, just and humane administration after armed resistance had been quelled, he was able to leave the district as thoroughly pacified as any district in the archipelago. Meanwhile, his volunteer appointment having lapsed, Liscum had been assigned to the colonelcy of the Ninth Infantry, then on duty in Luzon—a regiment with a long and honorable record, whose commander in the Mexican War was another Vermonter, in the person of Colonel Truman B. Ransom, formerly President of Norwich University, who fell at the head of his regiment in the storming of the Bishop's Palace on the heights of Chapultepec.

In June, 1900, the Ninth Infantry was selected to form the American contingent of the allied forces sent to China to relieve the siege of the legations in Peking. It was so chosen because of its splendid record, and because the utmost confidence was placed in the discretion and ability of Col. Liscum to perform a difficult and trying duty under the eyes of the soldiers of England, Russia, Germany, France, Italy, Austria and Japan. What credit the performance of that duty reflected on the

United States, we all know. Liscum landed with his command, 1,350 strong, at Taku, China, on the 9th of July, and pushed right on to take part in the assault on the walled city of Tien Tsin, which barred the way to the Chinese capital. In the attack on this city, July 13, Liscum, under the orders of the British General Dordard directing him to support the brave Japanese, was sent into a position of the utmost difficulty and danger. Passing through a gate in the mud wall which formed the outer defence of the city, the regiment found itself in a cul de sac—before it the frowning city wall, with a deep moat outside of it, and upon the right flank a line of fortified mud houses, from which came a murderous enfilading rifle fire. To silence this Liscum ordered his men to charge the houses. The ground to be covered was marshy and crossed by ditches. The men had struggled to within forty yards of the houses, when the color bearer fell. Col. Liscum seized and raised the colors, and a moment later fell, shot through the abdomen. "I'm hit," he said to an officer who ran to him. "Get at 'em if you can." Then to the men, "Don't retreat—keep firing." These were his last words. Major Regan, his next in command, and three captains were struck down and the men, seeing that further advance was impossible, sought shelter in the ditches, and held their place until nightfall,

when they made their way back, bringing with them the body of Col. Liscum, and the bodies of many of their number, killed and wounded.

Col. Liscum's remains were brought home and interred with high honors in the National cemetery at Arlington, President McKinley and many men of high distinction in military and civil stations being in sorrowful attendance.

Some of us may stand in days to come by the grave of General Liscum on the shore of the Potomac, and we will say to him, and of him, in the words of Bayard Taylor's "Song of the Camp," which to me is one of the most touching of the war lyrics of our language:

"Sleep soldier, still in honored rest,
Your truth and valor wearing,
The bravest are the tenderest
The loving are the daring."

General Liscum was married in 1867 to Miss May Diven, daughter of Gen. A. S. Diven of Elmira, N. Y. Into the sacred circle of their private life it is not for us to enter, further than to know that she was a fit companion, brave and self-reliant, sharing his patriotic spirit, cheering him by her companionship and her care—as true and devoted a wife as he was true, faithful and devoted as a husband.

Emerson Liscum's career as a soldier was marked by thorough mastery of his profession in all its details; by high spirit, coolness and indomitable courage in action; by absolute integrity, and by marked courtesy. As a commander he had the fullest confidence, respect and affection of his men. As a companion he was genial, and clean in speech and thought. He was a genuine Vermonter, proud of his State, her history, her soldiers and her people. He became a member of the First Church of Burlington in his youth, retained his connection therewith until his death, and did no discredit to his Christian profession. He cared not for notoriety. No correspondents, charged to send praises, inspired or uninspired, to the newspapers, were around his headquarters. He owed his successive promotions to sheer merit, and by such merit alone he won a national fame.

The issue of Harper's Illustrated Weekly for Memorial Day, 1901, contained a striking cartoon. It depicts a vast parade of veterans and school children passing before the guardian genius of America, who leans upon a shield inscribed on which are the names of Washington, Lincoln, Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Lawton and Liscum. Who will say that our modest Vermont hero was not worthily included in that list of shining names, crowned with immortal honor? It is most fitting that his portrait

should adorn the capitol of his native State, and commend to generations to come the lesson of his noble example.

The portrait was then taken by the members of the Governor's staff to the place where it was to hang, near the entrance to the Hall of the House, accompanied by Mrs. Liscum and an Escort of Honor comprising Governor McCullough, Ex-Governors Pingree, Ormsbee and Stickney, Colonel Benedict, Colonel Eugene D. Dimmick, 2nd U. S. Cavalry, commanding Fort Ethan Allen; Colonel E. M. Coates, U. S. A. retired, late commanding officer of the 12th U. S. Infantry, in which General Liscum served during the war for the Union; Commander Allan D. Brown, U. S. N., retired, Representatives W. S. Vincent, member from Burlington, J. S. Sweet, member from Huntington, and C. C. Miller, member from Burlington in 1900, who introduced the resolution authorizing the Governor to procure the portrait.

The ceremonies closed with the hanging of the painting in the place assigned to it.


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